

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions,  
and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) An aqueous nickel slurry comprising:

water;

nickel fine powder provided thereon with an insoluble  
inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel  
fine particles constituting the fine powder;

polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof; and

at least one member selected from the group consisting of  
ammonium hydroxides substituted with organic substituents and  
hydroxyl group-containing amine compounds.

2. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in  
claim 1, comprising:

water;

nickel fine powder provided thereon with an insoluble  
inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel  
fine particles constituting the fine powder;

polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof; and

an ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic  
substituents.

3. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, comprising:

water;

nickel fine powder provided thereon with an insoluble inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel fine particles constituting the fine powder;

polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof; and

a hydroxyl group-containing amine compound.

4. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, comprising:

water;

nickel fine powder provided thereon with an insoluble inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel fine particles constituting the fine powder;

polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof;

an ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents; and

a hydroxyl group-containing amine compound.

5. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, wherein the concentration of the nickel fine powder provided thereon with the insoluble inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel fine particles in the aqueous nickel slurry is not less than 25% by mass.

6. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, wherein the amount of the insoluble inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel fine particles ranges from 0.05 to 10% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel, the amount of the polyacrylic acid or the ester or salt thereof ranges from 0.05 to 5% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel, the amount of the ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents, if present, ranges from 1 to 30% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the polyacrylic acid or the ester or salt thereof, and the amount of the hydroxyl group-containing amine compound, if present, ranges from 0.5 to 10% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel.

7. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 5, wherein the amount of the insoluble inorganic oxide adhered to the surface of the individual nickel fine particles ranges from 0.05 to 10% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel, the amount of the polyacrylic acid or the ester or salt thereof ranges from 0.05 to 5% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel, the amount of the ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents, if present, ranges from 1 to 30% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the polyacrylic acid or the ester or salt thereof, and the amount of the hydroxyl group-containing amine compound, if present, ranges from 0.5 to 10% by mass on the basis of the total mass of the nickel.

8. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, wherein the insoluble inorganic oxide is at least one member selected from the group consisting of oxides and double oxides containing silicon, aluminum, zirconium or titanium.

9. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 5, wherein the insoluble inorganic oxide is at least one member selected from the group consisting of oxides and double oxides containing silicon, aluminum, zirconium or titanium.

10. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 7, wherein the insoluble inorganic oxide is at least one member selected from the group consisting of oxides and double oxides containing silicon, aluminum, zirconium or titanium.

11. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, wherein the average primary particle size of the nickel fine particles ranges from 0.05 to 1  $\mu\text{m}$  and the insoluble inorganic oxide is in the form of fine particles whose primary particle size is not more than 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  and whose average primary particle size is not more than 0.2 time that of the nickel fine particles.

12. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 5, wherein the average primary particle size of the nickel fine particles ranges from 0.05 to 1  $\mu\text{m}$  and the insoluble inorganic oxide is in the form of fine particles whose primary particle size is not more than 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  and whose average primary

particle size is not more than 0.2 time that of the nickel fine particles.

13. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 10, wherein the average primary particle size of the nickel fine particles ranges from 0.05 to 1  $\mu\text{m}$  and the insoluble inorganic oxide is in the form of fine particles whose primary particle size is not more than 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  and whose average primary particle size is not more than 0.2 time that of the nickel fine particles.

14. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1, wherein the polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof is ammonium polyacrylate, the ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents is tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide and the hydroxyl group-containing amine compound is diethanolamine.

15. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 5, wherein the polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof is ammonium polyacrylate, the ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents is tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide and the hydroxyl group-containing amine compound is diethanolamine.

16. (original) The aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 13, wherein the polyacrylic acid or an ester or salt thereof is ammonium polyacrylate, the ammonium hydroxide substituted with organic substituents is tetraalkyl ammonium

hydroxide and the hydroxyl group-containing amine compound is diethanolamine.

17. (canceled)

18. (original) A conductive paste comprising the aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1 and a binder.

19. (original) A conductive paste comprising the aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 13 and a binder.

20. (original) A conductive paste for use in forming a multilayer ceramic capacitor comprising an aqueous nickel slurry as set forth in claim 1 and a binder.